AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 8, 11, 18, 25, 28, 35, 40, and 43, and insert new claims 48-53. A complete listing of the current pending claims is provided below and supersedes all previous claim lists.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a x-ray image, comprising:

collecting a first x-ray image and a second x-ray image;

determining a composite image based on the first and second x-ray images;

collecting a third x-ray image, wherein at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the third x-ray ~~images~~ image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and

enhancing a feature in the third x-ray image by adjusting the third x-ray image based on the composite image.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first, second, and third x-ray images are generated in a sequence.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first, second, and third x-ray images each contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the determining a composite image comprises performing a image averaging on the first and second x-ray images.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the image averaging is performed using a boxcar averaging technique.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the image averaging is performed based on a weighted average.

2

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the adjusting comprises subtracting the composite image from the third x-ray image.

8.   (Currently Amended) A system for processing a x-ray image, comprising:
        means for collecting a first x-ray image and a second x-ray image;
        means for determining a composite image based on the first and second x-ray images;
        means for collecting a third x-ray image, wherein at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the third x-ray images image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and
        means for enhancing a feature in the third x-ray image by adjusting the third x-ray image based on the composite image.

9.   (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the means for determining a composite image comprises means for performing an image averaging on the first and second x-ray images.

10.   (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the means for adjusting comprises means for subtracting the composite image from the third x-ray image.

11.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having a set of stored instructions, the execution of which causes a process to be performed, the process comprising:
        collecting a first x-ray image and a second x-ray image;
        determining a composite image based on the first and second x-ray images;
        collecting a third x-ray image, wherein at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the third x-ray images image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and
        enhancing a feature in the third x-ray image by adjusting the third x-ray image based on the composite image.

12.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the first, second, and third x-ray images are generated in a sequence.

3

13. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the first, second, and third x-ray images each contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

14. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the determining a composite image comprises performing an image averaging on the first and second x-ray images.

15. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 14, wherein the image averaging is performed using a boxcar averaging technique.

16. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 14, wherein the image averaging is performed based on a weighted average.

17. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the adjusting comprises subtracting the composite image from the third x-ray image.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a x-ray image, comprising:
collecting one or more x-ray images;
determining a composite image based on the one or more x-ray images;
collecting an input x-ray image, wherein at least a portion of one of the one or more x-ray images and at least a portion of the input x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and
enhancing a feature of the input x-ray image based on the composite image.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the collecting the one or more x-ray images comprises generating the one or more x-ray images in a sequence.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the input x-ray image contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

4

21.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the determining a composite image comprises performing an image averaging on the one or more x-ray images.

22.   (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the image averaging is performed using a boxcar averaging technique.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the image averaging is performed based on a weighted average.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the enhancing comprises subtracting the composite image from the input x-ray image.

25.   (Currently Amended) A system for processing an image, comprising:

   means for collecting one or more x-ray images;

   means for determining a composite image based on the one or more x-ray images;

   means for collecting an input x-ray image, wherein at least a portion of one of the one or more x-ray images and at least a portion of the input x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and

   means for enhancing a feature of the input x-ray image based on the composite image.

26.   (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the means for determining a composite image comprises means for performing an image averaging on the one or more x-ray images.

27.   (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the means for enhancing comprises means for subtracting the composite image from the input x-ray image.

28.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having a set of stored instructions, the execution of which causes a process to be performed, the process comprising:

   collecting one or more x-ray images;

5

determining a composite image based on the one or more x-ray images;

collecting an input x-ray image, wherein <u>at least a portion of one of</u> the one or more x-ray images and <u>at least a portion of</u> the input x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and

enhancing a feature of the input x-ray image based on the composite image.

29.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the collecting the one or more images comprises generating the one or more x-ray images in a sequence.

30.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the input x-ray image contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

31.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the determining a composite image comprises performing an image averaging on the one or more x-ray images.

32.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein the image averaging is performed using a boxcar averaging technique.

33.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein the image averaging is performed based on a weighted average.

34.   (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 28, wherein the enhancing comprises subtracting the composite image from the input x-ray image.

35.   (Currently Amended) A method of processing a x-ray image, comprising:

obtaining a first x-ray image;

obtaining a second x-ray image, wherein the first and the second x-ray images are obtained using x-ray having an energy level<u>, and at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the second x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object</u>; and

6

determining a composite image based on at least a portion of the first and second x-ray images.

36.   (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein the first and second x-ray images are generated in a sequence.

37.   (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein the first and second x-ray images each contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

38.   (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein the determining a composite image comprises subtracting at least a portion of the first x-ray image from at least a portion of the second x-ray image.

39.   (Original) The method of claim 35, further comprising determining a value associated with a contrast of the composite image.

40.   (Currently Amended) A system for processing a x-ray image, comprising:
       means for obtaining a first x-ray image;
       means for obtaining a second x-ray image, wherein the first and the second x-ray images are obtained using x-ray having an energy level, and at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the second x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and
       means for determining a composite image based on at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the second x-ray image.

41.   (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the means for determining a composite image comprises means for subtracting at least a portion of the first x-ray image from at least a portion of the second x-ray image.

7

42. (Original) The system of claim 40, further comprising means for determining a value associated with a contrast of the composite image.

43. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having a set of stored instructions, the execution of which causes a process to be performed, the process comprising:

obtaining a first x-ray image;

obtaining a second x-ray image, wherein the first and the second x-ray images are obtained using x-ray having an energy level, and at least a portion of the first x-ray image and at least a portion of the second x-ray image comprise images of a same portion of an object; and

determining a composite image based on at least a portion of the first and second x-ray images.

44. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein the first and second x-ray images are generated in a sequence.

45. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein the first and second x-ray images each contains an image of at least a portion of an animal body.

46. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein the determining a composite image comprises subtracting at least a portion of the first x-ray image from at least a portion of the second x-ray image.

47. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein the process further comprising determining a value associated with a contrast of the composite image.

48. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the feature comprises a moving feature.

49. (New) The system of claim 8, wherein the feature comprises a moving feature.

8

50.   (New) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the feature comprises a moving feature.

51.   (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the first and the second x-ray images are generated using an imaging device that remains stationary between a first time at which the first x-ray image is generated and a second time at which the second x-ray image is generated.

52.   (New) The system of claim 40, wherein the means for obtaining the first x-ray image and the means for obtaining the second x-ray image comprises an imaging device that remains stationary between a first time at which the first x-ray image is generated and a second time at which the second x-ray image is generated.

53.   (New) The computer readable medium of claim 43, wherein the first and the second x-ray images are generated using an imaging device that remains stationary between a first time at which the first x-ray image is generated and a second time at which the second x-ray image is generated.

9